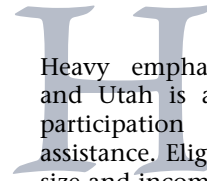


Utah's Version



The Department of Workforce Services administers the Family Employment Program (FEP)—Utah's version of "welfare reform."

Poverty in Utah What's our Role?



Heavy emphasis is placed on employment and Utah is accountable for minimum work participation rates for families receiving assistance. Eligibility for FEP is based on family size and income. The majority of participants in the program are single parents with dependent children. The Department also administers the Food Stamp Program—also based on household composition and income. Currently there are more than 55,000 open Food Stamp cases in Utah.

Many of the families receiving these services live on annual incomes near or below the poverty line. The Department is very proactive in changing those circumstances and connecting recipients with jobs and/or training to help them become self-sufficient.

Parents who participate in the Family Employment Program are required to negotiate an employment plan to remain eligible for the program. Utah encourages participation in employment barrier removal activities, such as mental health or substance abuse treatment, as well as training activities if they will help parents succeed in the long term.

Approximately 9.6 percent of Utah's population lives at or below the federal poverty level compared to 12.4 percent nationally. Currently there are around 6400 open Family Employment Program cases.

Although these programs and others that the Department administers will not end poverty in the state, they do have an impact on those who take advantage of the supportive services to improve that family's lives, and perhaps prevent the next generation from falling in a similar circumstance. Unlike AFDC, where there was no incentive to work or participate in training, the department's Family Employment Program is aimed at breaking the cycle of generations following generations living below the poverty level or living on the edge. 